LABOUR MONTHLY

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DEFLATION, DEVALUATION AND DAMNATION

The Editor

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WAL HANNINGTON

The Fight Against Unemployment Today

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THE TRUTH ABOUT 'THE TIMES'

Allen Hutt

★

Cairo Seminar: Michael Harmel

Scotland and the Freeze: Sam Barr

DECEMBER 1966

Two Shillings

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LABOUR MONTHLY

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CONTENTS

Page

Notes of the Month: Deflation, Devaluation and Damnation. *Fictitious Alternatives—Through Deflation to Devaluation—Two-Armed Bandit—The 'New Capitalism'—Gold and Capitalism—Collapse of the Gold Standard—From Gold to Paper—Inflation and Expropriation—Concealed Wage Cutting—Accelerating Inflation—High Cost of Paper—Dollar Offensive to Dominate Gold—Projects for a New International Monetary System—French Counter-Offensive Against Dollar Domination—Economics and Politics—True Battle of the Left* .. .. **R.P.D.** 545

The Fight Against Unemployment Today. Leader of the pre-war Unemployed Movement on the new features of the fight today .. .. **Wal Hannington** 560

Scotland and the Freeze. Clyde convener calls for planned programme for Scotland and resistance to wages freeze **Sam Barr** 566

The Truth About *The Times*. Leading journalist warns of dangerous consequences of Thomson take-overs .. .. **Allen Hutt** 570

Cairo Seminar. Unity of thought and purpose of African Leaders for freedom and advance to socialism .. **Michael Harmel** 575

New Light on Weapon Costs. Significance of Sir Solly Zuckerman's new book on the cost of new weapons .. **Ivor Montagu** 578

National Convention on Vietnam. Action for peace in Vietnam **Zelda Curtis** 582

Obituaries: Wal Hannington 560
Dr. Hewlett Johnson 577

Forty Years Ago 565

Illustrations: Sculptors of the German Democratic Republic .. 568-9

Correspondence: On Roger Casement .. **C. Desmond Greaves** 574

Book Reviews: 'The Company I've Kept', Hugh MacDiarmid: *Sir Compton Mackenzie*; 'Argument on Socialism', Maurice Dobb: *D. N. Pritt*; 'The Kremlin and the Embassy', Sir William Hayter: *Andrew Rothstein* 585

Index 587

Rising Response .. .. **Helen Falber** 592

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Notes of the Month

DEFLATION, DEVALUATION AND DAMNATION

Twenty-nine distinct damnations,
One sure if another fails
ROBERT BROWNING

November 15, 1966

Talk of devaluation is now extending. Contrary to the procedure of the two previous devaluations of sterling, when up to the last the very word was taboo in the public prints, and solemn official repudiations of the idea as if it were the sin against the Holy Ghost were repeated by the Chancellor up to the moment when the blow fell, this time the proposition is freely canvassed in the financial and general press as a possible policy. Rupee devaluation and its disastrous consequences in India have already provided the warning. Indeed, the successive waves of pressure on sterling during the recent period have come, not only from foreign bankers, but also from British financial interests speculating on a future devaluation.

Fictitious Alternatives

In some quarters devaluation is presented as if it were an alternative policy to the present policy of deflation. Indeed, in some quarters of left opinion devaluation is presented as a 'left wing' alternative to the 'right wing' policy of deflation and the wage freeze. Thus, in a prominent full-page article under the title *Devaluation*, John Horam wrote in *Tribune* of November 4:

> The Left should not be frightened off by the so-called financial experts. The case for devaluation is now very strong . . . The Left . . . should fight for devaluation with tooth and claw.

It is really time to endeavour to clear up this confusion which could become dangerous. Already it was deadly for certain sections of Labour opinion, claiming to represent a 'left' viewpoint (*New Statesman*, etc.) to welcome the July offensive against wages and trade union rights as 'stumbling into socialism'. Today, it would be no less deadly if certain other sections, sincerely desiring to represent a left viewpoint in opposition to the July offensive (*Tribune*, etc.), were to begin to campaign for devaluation as the supposed alterna-

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tive policy. Such a campaign would be coming at a moment when devaluation might very well prove the next phase of the same basic offensive of the big financial interests against the working class and the conditions of the people.

Remember 1931

On the walls of Belfast today can be seen chalked in giant letters the inflammatory slogan 'REMEMBER 1690'. This is, of course, a reflection of the present unstable situation of the British-imposed partition of Ireland, when the rulers of both States are preparing to enter the Common Market, with a consequent question mark appearing over the future of the Border, and Premiers O'Neill and Lemass accordingly met and shook hands; but the entire economic-social-political structure of Orange Unionism in the North, not merely religion, but jobs, deals, influence and gerrymandering, is built on a supposed eternal rigidity and hostility, thus giving rise to diehard revolts reflected in Paisleyism (see Desmond Greaves' revealing article in our September issue) or the episode of the signatures of half the Unionist MPs against O'Neill. It is doubtful whether in this country the chalking on the walls of such inflammatory slogans as 'Remember 1649' or 'Remember 1848' would arouse more than a slight wrinkle of perplexity among a population long indoctrinated by their rulers to be certain of only one date in history, the date of the reactionary conquest of 1066. Nevertheless, it is probable that for many in the labour movement 1931 still carries a vivid and painful memory, which it is appropriate to recall in the situation of today. We have in mind here, not the main and well-known political lesson of the classic exposure of reformism or 'MacDonaldism' and its open transition to Toryism, but the specific lesson of what happened to sterling, and how the offensive against the working class and the people was carried out.

Through Deflation to Devaluation

What happened in 1931? The crisis of sterling and the deficit on the balance of payments led to the customary grave warnings from the bankers and the launching of a ferocious offensive of deflation and cuts to 'save the pound'. The May Economy Committee was appointed in February to devise the offensive, and its Report, which shocked the whole labour movement, was published at the end of July, immediately after Parliament had gone into recess.

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On August 12 the Cabinet Economy Committee was appointed. The role of the international bankers was expressed in the credits made available by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York and the Bank of France. The Labour Cabinet was meeting daily to discuss cuts and submitting its programme of cuts for the approval of the international bankers. On the fateful day of August 23 the Labour Cabinet, after the majority had agreed to a full programme of cuts, prepared by the Economy Sub-Committee, amounting to £78 million, and including the 10 per cent cut on the unemployed, was waiting for hours in the garden of 10 Downing Street to receive the telegram from the banking firm of Morgans in New York which would convey the verdict of the All Highest. But MacDonald, realising that the dissenting minority in the Cabinet represented the majority of the trade union and labour movement, took it into his own hands to dissolve the Cabinet, and, together with Snowden and Thomas, joined the Tories and Liberals to form the National Government. The National Government brought in the Emergency Budget on September 9, imposing cuts totalling £70 million. All this was to 'save the pound'. On September 20 Britain went off the gold standard. Thus the deflation offensive came first. Devaluation followed.

Two-Armed Bandit

There is a reason for this order of events. Deflation and devaluation are formal opposites, but in their effective significance far from contradictory alternatives. They are variations of method for the same basic offensive of finance-capital to endeavour to solve its crisis at the expense of the workers and the standards of the mass of the people. Deflation restricts employment and credit and purchasing power, and either directly imposes cuts or is accompanied by a wage freeze which in the conditions of price increases through taxation means a cut in real wages. In 1931 the cuts were open, as in the Baldwin period in the twenties. Today, with a Labour majority and a Labour Government, the cuts are operated through this more complex technique of a wage freeze, backed by statutory powers, heavy taxation increases to raise prices, and penal clauses against trade union resistance, together with a deliberately stimulated increase of unemployment to limit the conditions for any future wage increases. Devaluation, while hypothetically giving a temporary boost to exports (provided retaliation by other countries does not

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defeat this), would raise the cost of all imports and thereby raise all prices and lower the standards of all workers and all sections of the people dependent on earnings, sickness, unemployment or pension benefits, or fixed incomes. Two methods of achieving the same objective. Make the people pay for the extravagance of their imperialist rulers.

Order of Precedence

But the two methods are not necessarily simultaneous. There is an appropriate order. If devaluation were introduced in the midst of temporary boom conditions, successful winning of wage increases by the more effectively organised sections, and strength and militancy of the labour movement, the consequent all-round price increases resulting from devaluation would be met immediately by universal strongly backed demands of all sections for parallel wage increases to meet the rising cost of living, and the purpose of devaluation would be defeated. Hence the first stage is a grand campaign to halt wage increases, impose cuts either directly or indirectly and break the resistance of the labour movement—all in the name of a patriotic appeal to 'save the pound'. Then the ground is ready, if this is judged desirable, for the culminating offensive of devaluation. The pretext for the apparent reversal of policy can always be found by laying the blame on any sign of resistance of any section of the workers. Thus the naval revolt of Invergordon in mid-September was declared to be responsible for the devaluation of September 20. Similarly Premier Wilson in the summer took every opportunity to blame the seamen's strike for having 'blown him off course' and compelled the July offensive. It is remarkable, incidentally, how Britain's old realm of the sea, despite the loss of sea power to the United States, still continually turns up as the crucial sphere in every sharp turn of policy. The criminal folly of the Suez War teaches the same lesson. 'East of Suez' is essentially a sea and air policy, not a land policy. All honour to the militancy of Britain's sailors, whether merchant or Navy, in the historic testing times of 1931 and 1966, pointing to Britain's future Kronstadt. If now the Government, after all the pledges of inflexible rigidity to maintain the pound, should decide in the not distant future to devalue (it is always possible that the plans may have been already prepared with the International Monetary Fund, and a timetable devised, with the approach to the Common Market falling into place), no difficulty will be found in laying the blame on Mr. Cousins or the car workers

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or the hesitations of the TUC to place its head completely on the chopping block, or on any current event of the class struggle which may arise during the coming winter.

The 'New Capitalism'

The grand apostles of the 'new capitalism' never tire to tell us how their hero is completely changed from the bad old days described and analysed by Karl Marx. Wisdom must no longer be sought from Highgate Cemetery. The laws of capitalism analysed by Marx, of boom and slump, of unemployment, of attacks on wages, of the battle between profits and wages, of class divisions, no longer apply. It is true that this 'new' gospel, endlessly repeated during these recent years by all the Jays, Stracheys and the whole tribe of their successors, is a little hoary. When the journalist Garvin nearly forty years ago was given the job of editing the new streamlined Americanised 'picturised' *Encyclopædia Britannica* for its Fourteenth Edition, he had the brilliant idea to insert for the first time an article on 'Capitalism' (after all, there had long been articles on 'Socialism' and 'Communism'; indeed, the writer of these Notes had produced the article on 'Communism' in the old still-English Twelfth Edition). Writing the article himself, he pronounced the oracular verdict that the 'tidal movement' of successive crises and booms and slumps had 'now much abated' in violence owing to the superior organisation of modern capitalism. Unfortunately for him, his Fourteenth Edition was published in 1929, the year of the onset of the biggest world economic crisis in capitalist history. However, all this is too long ago to be familiar to the present neophyte preachers of the 'new capitalism', who believed that they had discovered a new gospel. It is true that their new gospel is beginning to look a little tarnished now, when they also in their turn have begun to fall flat on their noses, with the steep rise in unemployment, the wage freeze or the admitted widening gulf between the imperialist exploiting powers and the poorer exploited nations within the sphere of neo-colonialism.

Change—In Fulfilment of Marxism

Nevertheless, there is a sense in which present-day capitalism is in fact profoundly different from the capitalism described by Marx, though not in the sense that these new gospellers mean. It is not that the laws of motion of capitalist society laid bare by Marx have been

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falsified by subsequent developments. On the contrary, these laws have been so relentlessly carried out in their further operation as to produce a new and vastly changed state of affairs, not only politically, but also economically. The laws laid bare by Marx in the days of classic nineteenth century capitalism, the laws of increasing concentration and centralisation of capital, of the effects of new inventions and the development of technique, of the consequences of the world framework of the operations of capital rendering out of date the old calculations based exclusively on West European capitalism, and of the sharpening of class contradictions to the point of socialist revolution, have received such fulfilment in the transition to monopoly capitalism and the imperialist era, the opening of the general crisis of capitalism and the world socialist revolution, and the present parallel existence of state monopoly capitalism in the old imperialist centres alongside the extending world of socialism and national liberation, as to reach to new conditions, not only going far beyond those analysed in Marx's *Capital* a century ago, but also far beyond those analysed in Lenin's *Imperialism* half a century ago, and requiring new analysis.

Gold and Capitalism

One of the most significant spheres in which this profound change can be seen is in relation to the role of gold and the questions of currency and inflation. In the classic nineteenth century capitalism analysed by Marx gold represented the commodity which had become established (sometimes with silver in a secondary capacity) as the universal equivalent, the measure of value, and the standard of price, recognised in all developed capitalist countries irrespective of governments, the basis of all national currencies and of credit, and the final means of settlement in international trade and exchange. The pound, the franc, the mark and the dollar had their decisive meaning in terms of gold. Gold could only fulfil this function because it was itself a commodity, with its value determined, as with every commodity, by the labour requisite for its production. The function of gold as the universal equivalent of money was not established by government decree, or by the invention of any particular individual or by an agreement drawn up between people or states. Gold was the commodity which fulfilled this function because it was the commodity whose characteristics in use were most suitable for this function, and therefore came to replace clumsier, less durable or otherwise less suitable alternatives.

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Gold Independent of Governments

Thus gold was the objective measure of value, independent of governments, to which governments had to conform. If a government 'debased' the coinage, that is, lowered the proportion of gold, or of the equivalent of gold, in the coins issued from its mint, while leaving the nominal denomination unchanged, this was recognised as a crime, which in its effect lowered the value of the given coinage, and thereby raised prices in terms of that coinage, but did not change the function of gold as the measure of value. Gold was thus the automatic brake, the expression of the objective character of capitalist market economy, ruthless in its operation, but by its very independence of government control to that extent limiting the whims and extravagance of governments, and maintaining the equilibrium of the capitalist economy and international economic relations. Such was the classic capitalism analysed by Marx.

Collapse of the Gold Standard

Today all this is changed in the current forms of functioning of capitalism. Whereas before 1914 the golden sovereign was the visible expression of the solidity and strength of British capitalism, and all the banknotes and business paper maintained their stability on the basis of being ultimately redeemable in gold, today not only has the sovereign purse disappeared from the equipment of the respectable citizen, but it is now a crime for private citizens to possess golden sovereigns, and the attempts of desperate citizens to protect themselves and possess some durable form of value by the new craze for buying golden medallions of famous historical personages is being met with threats of penal sanctions against the production and sale of such medallions. There is no more vivid expression of the general crisis of capitalism in the economic sphere than this collapse of the old pre-1914 gold standard—for the present 'gold exchange standard' is a very different system, manipulated by the most powerful finance-capitalist interests, dominantly American; thinly concealing the ceaseless battle, alongside co-operation, of the currencies of the rival imperialist blocs, of the dollar, sterling, the franc and the mark; and only revealing in the last analysis, when the chips are down, the ultimate basis still in gold as the final measure of value.

From Gold to Paper

The first world war brought the moratorium—at first believed to be temporary, but in fact the end—for Britain's position as the

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world's financial centre. Gold was replaced for domestic purposes by an irredeemable paper currency as a supposed temporary war-time emergency measure. As soon as the war was over, Britain's rulers directed all their efforts to endeavour to restore the pre-1914 position with the pound based on gold at the old 1914 parity as the world's main currency and Britain as the world's financial centre. But the strength to maintain such a position had gone. Not only industrial primacy (this had already been lost since the 1880s to the United States, and subsequently to Germany), but also financial primacy had now passed to the United States. Up to 1914 Britain had been the unquestioned strongest world financial power, the world's creditor; the United States was a net debtor to Britain. After the first world war the United States had become the world's strongest financial power; Britain was a debtor to the United States. The Baldwin-Churchill Government's restoration of the gold standard at the old rate of $4.86 in 1925 represented the last desperate attempt to enable 'the pound to look the dollar in the face'.* The attempt failed; the economic strength to sustain the attempted parity was not there. In this sense Keynes's criticism at the time was justified. The prediction of the future collapse was made at the time in this journal. With the collapse of the gold standard in 1931 and the devaluation of the pound the old economic orthodoxy represented by Montagu Norman went down, and the charlatanism of the new orthodoxy—associated in the public mind henceforth, though not entirely correctly, with the theories of Keynes—proposing to solve the contradictions of capitalism by perpetually mounting inflation, took the helm. Gold disappeared from domestic view. The pyramids of paper grew.

Inflation and Expropriation

Inflation as a supposed technique for solving the contradictions of capitalism is a method of continuous expropriation of small

* How completely Britain's official economic strategy at that time was governed by the assumption of restoring Britain's old imperialist position as the financial centre and capital provider of the Empire was illustrated by the comment of *The Times* in that year when the City was startled by the news of Australia raising a loan in New York:

> When our export industries are at last placed upon a competitive basis, and we acquire thereby a larger surplus available for investment abroad, we shall of course as in the past be able to provide all the requirements of the Empire (*The Times*, July 9, 1925).

The illusions of permanent imperialism, which were by comparison more comprehensible then, are less excusable today forty-one years later, when the same basic argument is repeated by Harold Wilson to justify an equally disastrous domestic economic strategy.

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owners and those with lower incomes for the benefit of the big monopolists and financial speculators. The hero of the 'widows and orphans' or 'poor Annie' theory of capitalism, the small saver, who in accordance with all the teachings of his superiors thriftily put away his savings into the security of gilt-edged 2½ per cent Consols in 1919, trusting in the integrity and benevolence of the almighty State to protect him as the backbone of society, would find that by 1965 the market value of his investment was one-fifth of what he put there. The Stock Exchange firm of Zoete and Gordon recently published the calculation that an investment of £1 million in 2½ per cent Consols in 1919 would by 1965 have a nominal market value of £656,000, but, in view of the fall of the purchasing power of the pound during the same period to 6s 8d, the real value of this gilt-edged investment with all the backing of the State would have fallen to little more than one-fifth of the sum originally entrusted to the State by the thrifty saver (*Sun*, April 18, 1966). Four-fifths of 'poor Annie's' precious nest-egg have been successfully devoured.

Concealed Wage Cutting

In desperation to escape the dragon of inflation the small saver in recent years has turned to the fluctuating market of industrial shares, often through unit trusts. The Church Commissioners, always with a keen eye to the main chance, led the way in this, heedful of the scriptural warnings on the dangers of endeavouring to lay up treasures on earth. Here, too, in the present phase the small saver is learning that Stock Exchange quotations also can plunge as well as rise, and that only those on the inside and operating in a large way can be certain of profiting from the fluctuations in the jungle. The small fish are there to be eaten. The big fish feast. But what is thus vividly demonstrated from the experience of the small saver is only one aspect of the effect of inflation as a form of continuous expropriation from all lower incomes. Whereas an offensive to enforce a wage-cut requires a battle, permanent inflation provides a continuous cut in real wages without a battle. Such is the miracle of the post-Keynesian 'new capitalism'.

Accelerating Inflation

The pace of inflation has accelerated in the modern period. It might have been expected that the continuously accelerating advance of scientific invention and technology, making possible an astro-

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nomically expanding output for less labour, should have resulted in lower and lower prices and a falling cost of living. This was indeed the general trend, despite limitations, of the classic capitalism described by Marx in the second half of the nineteenth century. But with the transition to monopoly capitalism from the beginning of the twentieth century the problem of rising prices and the rising cost of living had already become a public issue during the decade before 1914. Kautsky's *High Cost of Living* was published in 1913, and the fall in real wages due to rising prices was a potent factor in the impetus to the increased militancy of the labour movement in this country and other countries during the years just preceding 1914. But the rate of increase then had become far greater in the era of the general crisis of capitalism, and with the development of inflation as the systematic technique of modern capitalism.

Rake's Progress

In the standard study *The City in the World Economy* by W. M. Clarke, published last year by the Institute of Economic Affairs, the author noted that between 1946 and 1958 the average annual rise in prices was between 4 per cent and 5 per cent, and commented: 'There is no precedent for such rapid inflation over the past hundred years'. The Report of the Committee on Decimal Currency, published this year, reviewed the movement of prices from A.D. 800 to 1965, and concluded that during all these close on twelve centuries the steepest rise had been during the past twenty-eight years from 1938 to 1965. The National Debt, which had risen from £629 million in 1900 to £7,435 million by the end of the first world war, and £21,365 million by the end of the second world war, has now been further raised in peace time to £30,438 million by 1965, or an increase of £9,000 million during these years of peace, and now requiring no less than £1,136 million in the current year for its service. The pound, if taken at 20s in 1900, had fallen to 3s 6d by 1965.

High Cost of Paper

An ironic climax has now been reached this year, when the Bank of England in March issued an appeal to the public to be content with dirtier currency notes, since the high cost of paper was making it ruinous to print the amount required for current use.

> In its quarterly bulletin the Bank says that to meet the demand for new notes it prints an average of over eight million a day . . . 'The Bank prints

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four or more times as many notes a head of population as are required in comparable countries abroad. To continue this would absorb scarce national resources on an extravagant scale . . . A continuance of the present trend can only lead to a misuse of resources; to reverse it would bring valuable economies' (*The Times*, March 9, 1966).

Who knows? These paper currency notes, which are so obviously dwindling in value all the time in the hands of every one who handles them, may yet eventually come to have a real value. They may finally come to be worth the paper they are printed on.

Dollar Offensive to Dominate Gold

But there is a further complication in the modern situation in respect of gold and the functioning of capitalism since the second world war. The United States emerged from the second world war with overwhelming financial predominance in the capitalist world. Most of the gold of the capitalist world flowed into the United States, and was there buried and locked away from general use deep in the vaults of Fort Knox. Thereafter the United States sought to use its predominance to make the dollar the indispensable basis of world currency. For this purpose the United States held down the price of gold, which its possession of the main stock of gold enabled it to control, at the old pre-war level, while all other commodities were soaring in price. In 1934 Franklin Roosevelt had fixed the gold value of the dollar at $35 to the ounce of gold, raising it from the previous $20 as a measure to combat the economic depression. Since the second world war till the present day the United States has insisted on maintaining rigid and unchanged this 1934 level, although the price of all other commodities has multiplied in general threefold or more. The result has been to make the available supply of gold as a basis for national currencies or international exchange one-third of the amount required to parallel the general rise in price levels. Thereby world capitalist economy has been compelled to accept the dollar as the universal measure of value and basis of all calculations. Each capitalist country, in place of the former gold reserve, holds now a 'gold and dollar reserve', based on gold and dollars, with an auxiliary role of sterling in the sterling area. This holding of dollars in each capitalist country's reserves constitutes in effect an interest-free loan to the United States, thus facilitating the expansion of U.S. capital to penetrate and even dominate the economy and industries of each secondary capitalist country.

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Crisis of 'International Liquidity'

On the other hand, this situation, although maintained for the past two decades, is not stable. The law of the unequal development of capitalism, originally demonstrated by Lenin, is powerfully operating. In 1948 the gold reserve of the United States was six times that of Western Europe (24 billion dollars to 4 billion). By 1964 the gold reserve of Western Europe was larger than that of the United States (18 billion to 15 billion). The United States is now seeking to correct its deficit in the balance of payments, and to limit its export of capital. The dollar is no longer so all-powerful in face of the increased strength of the capitalist economies of Western Europe, as well as of Japan. In these circumstances the maintenance of the gold-and-dollar standard, or so-called 'gold exchange standard', with the price of gold held down to one-third of the general rise in world price levels, with the dollar no longer adequate to fulfil the role of a parallel basis for world currency purposes, and with sterling, which had tried to fulfil a world role alongside the dollar, increasingly precarious and shaky, has become more and more obviously insufficient as a basis for the purposes of international exchange. On the other hand, the United States, intent on maintaining the predominance of the dollar, has rigorously opposed any question of bringing the price of gold up to date, which in accordance with the normal working of the old capitalist economic system, would have trebled the basis for international currency and exchange.

Projects for a New International Monetary System

Instead, the American and British financial controllers, operating in the American-dominated International Monetary Fund, have been elaborately discussing a variety of plans, the principal being known as the Triffin Plan, for establishing a kind of artificial new international currency fund other than gold or the dollar to provide the necessary reserves on an adequate scale for the central banks. These schemes have not yet got off the ground, or rather, from the clouds down to earth. For the difficulty confronting such schemes is that any system of currency or credit structure, if not ultimately based on the objective automatic regulating role of gold, can only be the creation of a state, and there is no world state. Consequently all such schemes assume the co-operation of the principal imperialist powers and their central banks as a stable continuing basis, despite the absence of any world capitalist state. But all such dreams of

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super-imperialism, whatever the benevolent intentions or elaborate would-be rational planning of the authors, in practice inescapably come up against the rock of inter-imperialist antagonisms. This is vividly illustrated at the present moment by the battle between French and American imperialism on the question of gold, the dollar and international monetary arrangements, and expressed in theoretical terms in the discussions which have been taking place in the recent meetings of the participants of the International Monetary Fund.

French Counter-Offensive against Dollar Domination

The offensive of France under De Gaulle against the domination of the United States in Europe, and the partial withdrawal from Nato, have been accompanied by a no less energetic offensive in the economic and financial sphere against dollar domination. France has been continuously withdrawing gold from the United States, and converting its dollar reserve into gold. The conceptions underlying this offensive were explained by the French financial expert, Jacques Rueff, in an interview to *The Economist* on February 13, 1965. He proclaimed as his aim:

> The central banks shall return to the old rule, of creating money only against gold or bills in national currency. In other words, they shall not build up, except for daily settlement, any assets in dollars . . . The mischief is not the mischief of the gold standard, but of the gold exchange standard . . . We are moving without any doubt to a result of the same kind as in 1931, because it is so clear that the dollar is approaching the end of its acceptability for payment abroad, and we shall have the same collapse.

Similarly in his statement last month, reported in *The Times* on October 25, 1966, on his proposals for the 'Group of Ten', i.e. the consortium of leading central banks:

> These countries would undertake not to increase their dollar or sterling balances from a certain date. They would undertake to double the price of gold at the same time . . . A doubling of the price of gold would give the world the certainty of expansion and prosperity . . . He emphasised that his plan did not constitute a devaluation.

Political Under-Currents

It would be highly unsuitable for the left to become involved in this battle between rival imperialist financial interests over the question of gold, gold revaluation or alternative international currency arrangements. It is worth noting that when the President of the Board of Trade, Douglas Jay, during his visit to Australia

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in September was reported as saying that a rise in the dollar price of gold 'would be in the interests of the whole world at the present time', Chancellor Callaghan was quick to issue a correction stating:

> Mr. Jay seems to have been saying that raising the price of gold was theoretically one possible way of increasing world liquidity, but that it was not of course a practical issue.

Exactly. United States domination must be accepted. In that sense, a certain objective progressive significance does attach to this battle of De Gaulle against dollar domination, comparable to the parallel battle against American domination in Europe and the rigid Nato framework, for closer co-operation with the socialist world, and for a settlement in Vietnam on the basis of fulfilment of the Geneva Agreements.

Economics and Politics

For in fact these economic questions cannot be separated from the political issues involved. The whole deception of the Wilson Labour Government's home economic policy, supposed to be designed against inflation and the deficit in the balance of payments, consists in concealing this connection. Inflation and the deficit in the balance of payments are attributed to wage increases outstripping production and excessive consumption by the people at home. Therefore the cure is stated to be to freeze or limit wages and cut down consumption by heavy increases in taxation. But it is precisely the Government's own expenditure, wasting scarce resources and man-power and labour and skill and output for overseas imperialist extravagance, which is the sole cause of the deficit (otherwise there would be a surplus), and which by this unproductive diversion of a heavy proportion of labour and output plays a key part in leading to the ceaseless rise in prices and inflation, with wages struggling to keep up. As Assistant Secretary Victor Feather said at this year's TUC on behalf of the General Council: 'All of us are fed up to the back teeth with wages chasing prices and never catching up.' He did not realise that what he was saying gave the lie to the official case for the wage freeze he was supposed to be defending, since this official case is based on the assumption that increases in wages are the cause of increases in prices. It is precisely the Government's policy which promotes the price increases and inflation, and thereby gives rise to the demands for wage increases to meet the rising cost of living ('wages chasing prices and never catching up'). Therefore it is the

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Government's policy which has to be fought and changed in order to deal with the crisis.

True Battle of the Left

For this reason the fight against the wage freeze and the July economic offensive and against the attack on trade union rights, and the fight for jobs and full employment, is not a repudiation, as the enemies of the left pretend, of the responsibility to tackle the difficulties of the present economic situation. On the contrary, it is the indispensable first step in order to tackle those difficulties. Success in this initially defensive fight means to compel the essential changes in Government policy, the end of the overseas cold war and imperialist commitments and waste of resources, and the transfer to urgent constructive tasks at home, which is the only progressive path forward to deal with the immediate present economic problems, and open the way to the further social and economic changes that are necessary. The task of the left is to fight in the forefront of this battle, and to make clear these aims and necessary path of advance to the whole trade union and labour movement and to the widest sections of the people. Diversions, either into speculations about an 'incomes policy' as a supposed 'socialist' strategy, or into advocacy of devaluation as a supposed 'left wing' alternative to solve the crisis, are no substitute for this essential immediate and long-term class fight.

R.P.D.

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WAL HANNINGTON

At the moment of going to press we learn of the tragically sudden death of Wal Hannington. In paying tribute to this valiant fighter of the working class, who will be for ever honoured in the records of the British labour movement, we believe it will be the wish of our readers that we should still print the following article which he wrote specially for *Labour Monthly* just before his death, and which is now the last article to come from his powerful pen. With deep feeling everyone will now await his memoirs which he had just completed and which will be published next year under the title *Never on Your Knees*.

THE FIGHT AGAINST UNEMPLOYMENT TODAY

Wal Hannington

THE problem of mass unemployment is as old as the capitalist system itself. The recurrent cycle of trade boom and slump has always been a feature of this system. The working class have always dreaded unemployment because they know that for those directly affected it means hardship for them and their families. But they also know that for those fortunate enough to remain in employment, increasing insecurity confronts them because the employing class will take advantage of available surplus labour to beat down the wage standards and conditions in industry and threaten the workers with dismissal if they show resistance to such attacks.

Therefore, in the past, socialists have always denounced capitalism as an unethical and wasteful system and have condemned Tory or Liberal Governments which tolerated the continuation of unemployment with its consequent degrading effects upon the workers. The trade union members knowing the danger to their negotiating power for better wages and conditions where extensive unemployment exists have always sought preventive policies against this economic and social evil.

But today, we have the amazing spectacle of a Labour Government deliberately creating unemployment! At the same time, it passes legislation for the specific purpose of preventing the trade unions performing their function of negotiating wage increases to

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keep pace with the rising cost of living. Government Ministers try to fool the workers by calling it a 'wages and prices freeze', knowing full well that it is wages alone, and not prices, that are being restricted and this consequently means a lowering of the living standards of the whole working class. At the same time the Government passes legislation in Parliament to authorise fines and imprisonment of workers who resist these attacks. What a shocking precedent this Labour Government has set for any future Tory Government!

When tens of thousands of workers who have received discharge notices from their employers because of the government policy, and their workmates propose to the employers that work-sharing by part-time working should be operated, the Minister of Labour forbids that course and publicly declares that the workers must be made fully unemployed. In an effort to justify publicly such an astonishing declaration, he says his purpose is re-deployment of the displaced labour in some other industry.

If that really was the purpose, why has not the Government publicly announced precisely where the surplus labour is to be absorbed; what rates of wages and conditions of employment will apply; and what provision has been made for housing the workers and their families who are expected to move to other parts of the country? None of these things have been done by the Government and the number of unemployed workers is now rapidly increasing.

If it were true that the Government wanted thousands of workers discharged from their present jobs in order to employ them elsewhere, why did it not prepare plans for such transference instead of pursuing a policy which has deliberately created mass unemployment? There can now be no doubt that the real aim of the leaders in this Labour Government is to rescue capitalism from yet another of its economic crises by smashing down the living standards of the working class. Those who can doubt the truth of this statement are either politically naive or too young to remember the treachery of the leadership in the Ramsay MacDonald Labour Government.

During the debate in the House of Commons on October 25 when twenty-eight Labour back-benchers voted against Part IV of the Prices and Incomes Act, Mr. Norman Atkinson, Labour MP for Tottenham and member of the Amalgamated Engineering Union, declared his opposition to this legislation and warned the Government that it would spell disaster for the labour movement. Referring to the rapid increase in the number of unemployed he reminded the House that on three occasions Mr. Wilson had stated

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that the number of unemployed would not rise above 480,000 and if there were signs of this being exceeded the Government would reverse the machine. This is downright deception of the people on the part of Mr. Wilson because he must know that in the bedlam of capitalist economy no guarantee of control in the number of unemployed can be upheld. If that could be done, Ramsay MacDonald would have done it when there were three million unemployed. Such control can only be exercised within a socialist system of society where a planned economy operates, free from the effects of private ownership of industry where production for personal profit is the prime motive.

By enforcing a wage-freeze in a period of rising prices, this Labour Government is deliberately reducing the standard of living of the working class. In the year 1926 the Tory Government under the premiership of Mr. Stanley Baldwin achieved the same purpose by the more direct method of urging all employers to cut the wages of their workers. The workers met that attack with General Strike action which was betrayed on the ninth day by the General Council of the TUC. So the Baldwin Government got its way and the standard of living of the working class was savagely reduced. Before this attack the number of unemployed since 1921 had fluctuated between two million and one-and-a-quarter million at which it stood at the beginning of 1926. Baldwin argued that the nation could be set on the road to prosperity and the problem of unemployment could be solved if the workers were paid lower wages. 'The wages of all workers must come down' said Baldwin; and they did. But did unemployment disappear? On the contrary it enormously increased in the next five years and reached three million. Unemployment feeds on unemployment because if the purchasing power of the masses is reduced, either by wage reductions or unemployment, the demand for commodities declines thereby causing more workers to be thrown into unemployment. During the terrible depression years between the wars, mass unemployment was not caused by wage standards outstripping productive results. There was no shortage of goods; on the contrary, there was an abundance of all the necessities of life but millions of workers' families were reduced to a level of impoverishment which restricted their purchasing power to only the barest necessities of life and so mass unemployment continued. The leaders of this Labour Government seem to have learned nothing from the lessons of that period.

Since the close of the last war, we have lived through a phase

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of relatively full employment and consequently illusions have been created—especially among younger trade unionists and Labour supporters—that this is now an enduring condition of life within capitalism and that the memories of mass unemployment and the terrible poverty and struggles of the people in the years between the two wars can be regarded as merely the obsolete reflections of the older generation.

But we must not forget that although we have a Labour Government Britain is still a capitalist country and as long as that system prevails we are subject to the economic and financial contradictions which inevitably operate in capitalist society and which from time to time confront the people with a crisis. And now, once again, we have a Labour Government in power which instead of challenging the upholders of capitalism, challenges the trade union and general working-class movement and demands that it retreats from its hard-won rights and makes sacrifices to the vested interests of capitalism. As part of this pro-capitalist policy it deliberately creates unemployment with the danger of it swelling to enormous proportions.

Before the last war the working class in general (with the exception of those who held socialist views) were disposed to regard periods of unemployment as an unavoidable misfortune which must be endured until trade improved and more jobs were available. But today we find a new attitude being displayed by all workers. They are not prepared to accept unemployment as unavoidable. In factories where the workers are faced with this problem they are challenging the right of the employers to throw any of their workmates into unemployment. Those who are not on the list for discharge are taking strike action to save those who are. This is indeed a new and most encouraging spirit which I hope will be maintained and extended wherever workers are threatened with unemployment.

In the years of mass unemployment between 1920 and 1940 the unemployed were compelled to create their own defensive organisation, the National Unemployed Workers' Movement, because the official leadership of the labour and trade union movement refused to provide the militant leadership that was necessary to fight the starvation policy of the central and local government authorities.

The NUWM became an outstandingly powerful organisation which within a few hours could mobilise tens of thousands of unemployed workers for action on the streets of large cities and towns. The demonstrations which occurred at weekends always received massive support from workers who were still in employ-

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ment, and likewise, during the great National Hunger Marches to London, the employed rank and file trade unionists—despite official opposition from the leaders of the TUC and Labour Party Executive—rallied to the support of the marchers' contingents in all the towns and villages through which they passed and made it possible for them to reach their objective.

But whilst the unemployed under the leadership of the NUWM could exercise political influence by repeatedly harassing the Government and the County and Local Authorities by agitational activity, we lacked the economic power for industrial action which only the trade unions possessed.

In recent years there have been several isolated strikes in engineering factories when employers have announced redundancies—the euphemistic term for unemployment—and such actions by the employed workers have resulted in varying degrees of success. There have been unofficial strikes led by the shop stewards, but as the danger of mass unemployment has sharply increased because of the reactionary policy of this present Government the counter-action of the employed workers—particularly in the car industry—has brought a measure of official support by trade union executives and formal protests by the TUC General Council against Government policy. Unity of employed and unemployed must be maintained and developed. Unemployment with its disastrous consequences for the working class must be fought as a fundamental issue by the entire working-class movement. It must be prevented and the movement must be bold in its demands and its actions. 'Work or Full Maintenance' was the fighting slogan of the old National Unemployed Workers' Movement before the last war. It remains an apt slogan whilst unemployment exists, but now is the moment for the great strength of the trade union and general working-class movement to be shown in a determined manner to let the Government and employing class know that we will not tolerate unemployment.

Although the stand which is now being made in the car industry for work-sharing is, in the immediate circumstances, a praiseworthy effort, short-time working should not be accepted as a long-term policy. The trade unions must take up a positive and more effectual stand by insisting on the establishment of shorter working hours for all workers without reductions in pay and express the determination of the workers not to tolerate unemployment by organising great demonstrations of protest. If the TUC General Council or union executives will not issue the call for such action, then the trade union

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District Committees should take the responsibility for arranging joint action with Trades Councils and local Labour Parties.

Unless the present spirit of resistance shown by the workers is sustained and developed there can arise a grave danger of us drifting into a state of passive acceptance of unemployment and abandoning those unfortunate enough to be thrown out of work.

The ways in which this Government can reduce its expenditure and so end the economic and financial crisis which it claims has compelled the adoption of its present policy have been publicly stated many times by progressive writers and speakers in the press, radio and TV, and by Labour back-benchers in the House.

The plain fact is that the Wilson Government, like the MacDonald Government, is betraying the elementary principles of socialism and trying to save the rotten system of capitalism by the jugglery and anti-working-class methods that Tory Governments have always resorted to in the past.

We most certainly do not want the Tories back in power, but if the faith of the working class in a Labour Government is not to be shattered again as it was by the betrayal of the MacDonald Government in 1931, then we must compel the Labour Government to change its pro-capitalist policy and give protection to the working class by pursuing a socialist policy.

LABOUR MONTHLY FORTY YEARS AGO

The old Socialist teaching used to say that unemployment and poverty were inseparable from capitalism, and could only be solved by Socialism. The new teaching—we will not call it Socialist, but the Liberal teaching of the Labour Party—lays it down that unemployment and poverty will first be solved under capitalism, and then the happy community will amble peacefully into Socialism in the distant future. The old Socialist teaching used to condemn capitalism as chaotic. The new Liberal teaching proposes to organise capitalism. The old Socialist teaching used to declare that capitalism robbed the workers and must therefore be overthrown. The new Liberal teaching declares that capitalism can give wealth to the workers and must therefore be built up. What is the practical significance of this change-over? It needs very little consideration to see that the practical significance of this 'new' policy, which coincides with the betrayal of the industrial fight, with the Liberalising of the Labour Party, and with the whole defeatist stream of reformism at the present low ebb, lies, not in the sudden discovery of the urgency of the problem of poverty and the supposed advance from old-fashioned doctrinaire Socialism to 'practical' methods of dealing with poverty, but—*in the retreat from Socialism to capitalism, and in nothing else.*

(From Notes of the Month, *Labour Monthly*, December, 1926.)

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SCOTLAND AND THE FREEZE

Sam Barr

Member of the Clyde District Committee of the Boilermakers' Union

SCOTLAND is feeling the full weight of the Labour Government's economic measures and wage freeze, after 13 years of Tory misrule during which this country's future was left in the lap of the gods.

Scotland has always been in the forefront of the class struggle and every major issue that meant progress for the people and the workers. The Scottish people played a major and vigorous role in the return of a Labour Government in the 1964 and 1966 elections knowing that the only chance of survival for this country was Socialism. This was a dream that was to become a nightmare.

The situation confronting Scotland is that of closures, redundancies and short-time working. Hardest hit is the motor-car industry, light engineering, mining and heavy engineering. The unemployment figures at present are 67,000 and still increasing, which is the highest figure since 1963. Yet many of the trade unions are giving no lead to their members to take a stand and oppose these sackings. One of the main reasons why there is not greater resistance from the workers is the new redundancy agreement, better known in workers' circles as the golden handshake. I am a convener of shop stewards in one of the Clydeside shipyards which is going through a very difficult and serious phase. Whilst there is much talk of closures, there is also talk about the golden handshake, which helps to soften the blow of redundancies. This adversely affects the campaign being set up by the more militant workers to oppose closures and sackings.

The most serious situation that faces the unemployed is the lack of opportunity to obtain other types of jobs. In Bathgate, in Central Scotland, the redundant workers are dependent on the motor-car industry. There is no alternative work to be found and this is also the case in many other parts of Scotland. One of the main slogans featured by the Labour Party prior to the general elections was that they promised Scotland many new industries. We received two car plants and a steel strip mill, and in these also the workers are being faced with short time and redundancies. Although other new industries have been set up in Scotland and another seven factories

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are in the pipeline, these are not enough to absorb the workers who have been made unemployed. No wonder there is a feeling of bitterness against the Labour Government's policy and a feeling of being let down. No-one can blame the people of Scotland for saying that the Labour Government has failed them.

If Scotland is to survive as a nation it must have full employment. The Labour Government needs to build up our basic industries and introduce many more new industries than they are doing at present. It would be a crime to let the present trend continue, where we are losing an average of 40,000 people every year. This country cannot afford to lose such numbers, for among these people there are many highly skilled workers who will not be replaced for many years.

Emigration is not the answer to unemployment. What must be done is to organise the labour movement and the people to resist the economic measures which the Labour Government has introduced and demand new policies and a planned programme for Scotland. We must make sure that the workers fully understand what the wage freeze means to them and how it will affect their jobs and create mass unemployment. I would suggest that the only way that this can be done is through the shop stewards, in close association with their trade unions, calling mass meetings throughout industry.

We have also got to couple this fight with the demand that no workers should be paid off until suitable alternative jobs are found. The labour movement in Scotland should demand that the Labour Government change its present policies, which are only benefiting big business and not the workers who voted them into power. We should demand that they drop the wage freeze and anti-trade union legislation, and that they should stand up to the pressure from big business and monopolies. We should demand an end to military spending abroad and that the total arms bill should be cut by half. It will only be when the Labour Government carries through policies such as these, that this country will be able to solve the economic crisis confronting us, and by doing so it will take a step nearer to a socialist Britain.

ANNOUNCEMENT: PLEASE NOTE that owing to increased postal rates and other costs, we have to announce a price rise to 2s. 6d. as from January 1967. For our special advantageous terms for subscriptions see announcement on inside back cover.

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Arbeiter mutter — THEO BALDE
(Working-class Mother)

SCULPTOF OF THE GERMAN DEMOCRA REPUBLIC

Das Leben — EUGEN HOFFMAN
(Life)

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Memorial for the Dead — JURGEN VON WOYSKI

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THE TRUTH ABOUT *THE TIMES*

Allen Hutt*

THE Thomson takeover of *The Times* is a sensational event on any showing; newspaper men have known for some time that all was not well at Printing House Square and in recent months Fleet Street gossip has been busy with various takeover rumours; but the news of Lord Thomson's remarkable 85-15 per cent deal with the Astor family (very different from the usual 51-49 per cent of such arrangements) came as a surprise. A good deal of the subsequent comment has, however, been comically beside the point; one enthusiast even sought to advertise a 'save *The Times*' movement in that paper's agony column. Save *The Times* from, or for, what?

The simple fact is that *The Times* affair is an inevitable, if exceptionally startling, incident in the process of concentration of capital in the mass communications business which has been such a marked feature of recent years in this country. The economics of Big Business in newspapers and magazines have long since reached the point at which 'popular' daily newspapers with circulations well over a million are no longer viable (the *News Chronicle* and the *Daily Herald*; and no-one in the business is taking any money on the life prospects of the Herald's successor, *The Sun*). The 'class' or 'quality' dailies like *The Times* appear to need a minimum of 300,000 to be able to fix their advertising rates at a profitable level; since, even after the major changes of last May—front-page news and the rest of it—*The Times* is still falling some 20,000 short of that level, it now faces losses which have been described to me as 'stupendous'.

In the Press field, as everywhere else, the law of concentration of capital marches inexorably on; and all the talk about Press 'freedom', 'independence' and the like, much heard nowadays in respect of the *The Times-Sunday Times* merger, needs to be firmly related to that cold, hard fact of politico-economic life. We have the advantage of a frank and searching survey of the Press position in general, and of *The Times* in particular, from Mr. Cecil Harmsworth King, chief of the gigantic International Publishing Corporation (the Mirror-Odhams-Newnes-Fleetway etc., etc., group), by far the largest newspaper and magazine empire in the entire capitalist world.

* Mr. Hutt will be known to many of our readers as Vice-President of the National Union of Journalists and editor of the NUJ organ *The Journalist*; he contributes this article in his personal capacity.

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Emperor King, lecturing at Liverpool University on 'The Press and its Future', recalled how his uncle Northcliffe had saved *The Times* from certain shipwreck by taking it over in 1908. After Northcliffe's death in 1922 the paper was acquired by the multi-millionaire, Anglicised-American Astor family, who purported to run it, to quote Mr. King, 'as a national trust'. In the event the trustee-type machinery which was set up allegedly to prevent any transfer of the control of *The Times* for 'commercial profit' was coolly bypassed, when the crunch came. The sell-out to Lord Thomson was not even referred to the prescribed arbitral committee of the Lord Chief Justice, the Warden of All Souls, the President of the Royal Society, the President of the Institute of Chartered Accountants and the Governor of the Bank of England. This imposing Establishment 'safeguard' was of no consequence whatever.

Mr. King blandly characterised the Astors as 'knights errant' who were vulnerable in the jungle of Fleet Street. *The Times* had lacked, editorially and managerially, the 'ruthless zest which every paper must have'. Thus, he concluded, it had been driven to the Thomson takeover as 'the best alternative available'; and he opined, not unreasonably, that the expertise and capital of the Thomson Organisation ought to turn *The Times* into a 'first class and readable paper which should command commercial success'. As to the 'integrity' of the paper 'the fact is that Lord Thomson has the lion's share of the business and in the end his views of what is right for the paper must prevail'. So 'Fleet Street wonders whether the clap of thunder will ever be heard over Printing House Square again'.*

That somewhat rhetorical speculation of Mr. King's brings us back to the 'save *The Times*' cries. Saved, as I said, for what? It is time to sketch in the history of Fleet Street's Oldest Inhabitant, to begin to separate fact from legend. Started in 1785 by a failed City coal merchant who wanted to popularise a new method of setting type, *The Times* was built up, not as the mouthpiece of one party or faction, but as the organ of a class, of new capitalist rulers of Britain who fought their way to power in the first half of the 19th century. Hence the 'independence' of the paper, i.e., independence of Government or party subventions, and the maintenance of that independence

* *The Times* performed the remarkable feat, in its report of Mr. King's lecture, of suppressing every single one of his references to itself, despite their obviously topical and newsworthy character. Printing House Square has, however, always been second to none in its exercise of what Northcliffe once called the real power of the Press—'the Power of the Sup-Press'. At the time of Munich in 1938 a Liberal MP told the Commons: '*The Times* is not only partisan in its views, but it frequently refuses to allow the expression of opinion in its columns to which it is opposed'.

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by developing a vastly profitable commercial enterprise on the solid basis of till then unheard-of sales and advertising revenue.

By the 1850s *The Times* had achieved an extraordinary position. It pioneered in news-gathering and printing techniques. Aided by the newspaper stamp duty and other Press taxes (the 'taxes on knowledge'), which effectively barred any provincial daily Press, it enjoyed a monopolistic position. Its circulation was in excess of 50,000 a day when its Fleet Street competitors could reach no more than 4,000 to 5,000. The annual dividend on a one-sixteenth share in *The Times* rose as high as £5,000 or £6,000. Thus Printing House Square could glory in its 'independence' and contemptuously eschew the venality of its struggling contemporaries (as late as the 1850s papers like the *Morning Post* and the morning *Standard* were receiving secret subsidies from Napoleon III's Government in France).

In its early days, and precisely because of its bourgeois class character, *The Times* could 'thunder' against aristocratic corruption and incompetence. Its first outstanding editor, Thomas Barnes, who occupied the chair from 1817 to 1841, earned it the title of 'The Thunderer'. But even in those days William Hazlitt described the paper as 'the mouthpiece, oracle and echo of the Stock Exchange, the organ of the mercantile interest. It takes up no falling cause; fights no uphill battle; advocates no great principle; holds out a helping hand to no oppressed or obscure individual. It is "ever strong upon the stronger side",' and William Cobbett, in his own inimitable radical Press campaigning, always labelled it 'the bloody old *Times*'.

The official history of the paper admits that there was a clear political cleavage between *The Times* and the democratic forces, that the 'tone' of the paper was 'upper middle class'. *The Times* was a bitter enemy of trade unionism. When its compositors went on strike in 1810 they were pursued with all the rigours of the Combination Acts and savagely sentenced; one of them died in jail; and *The Times* composing room remained non-union until 1909. The subsequent catalogue of the paper's reactionary attitudes on a number of major issues is noteworthy. It was hostile to the French Republic of 1848 until General Cavaignac's massacre of the insurgent Parisian workers in the June days. Throughout the American Civil War it backed the slave-owning South. From the 1850s to the 1870s it pursued a policy of appeasement of the Russian Tsardom entirely out of line with the general trend of British public opinion. In the 1880s its hostility to the Irish national struggle led it to fall for the

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preposterous anti-Parnell Pigott forgeries (which ultimately cost the paper £200,000 and all but ruined it). In 1901, immediately after the crucial Taff Vale judgment, it launched a campaign against trade unionism quite unparalleled for its irresponsibility and dubious origins. And the older generation will grimly recall its support of Munich and its appeasement of Hitler, under the editorial direction of Geoffrey Dawson, in the fateful years up to the outbreak of the second world war; it is interesting that the official *History* maintains a discreet silence over the paper's temporary change, in 1941-45, under very different—and ephemeral—editorial influences, to a support of the Anglo-Soviet alliance which briefly brought it the joking nick-name 'the threepenny *Daily Worker*'.

A further word may be added about that mid-century appeasement of the Tsardom, since it happens to be fully documented. In 1923 a Cambridge historian, Mr. W. F. F. Grace, was able to publish the full texts of the dispatches to St. Petersburg of Baron Bronnow, then Russian Ambassador in London, which gave the whole game away. In respect of the Polish insurrection in 1863 and the Russian occupation of Khiva in Central Asia in 1872-73, the Brunnow dispatches disclosed in detail how J. T. Delane, most famous of *Times* editors, was induced to follow a pro-Russian line by Baron Lionel, head of the House of Rothschild, at that time the Tsardom's principal financiers. Delane had long had close personal connections with the Rothschilds. Mr. Grace concluded that the whole affair was 'the most striking example of the influence exerted by a foreign Government on a British newspaper'. It is curious, to say the least, to set this against the phrase in the official *History* about 'Delane's passionate determination to be independent of every influence but that of instructed public opinion'.

Enough has been said, I think, to make it quite plain that the labour movement need not worry one jot about a possible loss of Press 'thunder' that is totally legendary. But the absorption of the traditional 'upper-middle-class' organ by one of Britain's two largest capitalist Press organisations has other implications. Both the IPC and the Thomson Organisation represent formidable concentrations of capital. Both are autocracies, ruled absolutely by Mr. Cecil H. King and Lord Thomson of Fleet respectively. That the money-addicted Lord Thomson ('I make you a buck; you make me a buck') tends to let his editors alone so long as their papers are profitable is really neither here nor there from the point of view of society.

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In these pages last March I discussed 'Press Problems of the Labour Movement'. Thomson's takeover of *The Times* helps to make those problems more acute, in the sense that advancing capitalist concentration renders the other side more powerful. On the other hand, the strengthening of the great Press autocracies, with its perspective of internecine conflict and the eventual slaughter of more newspapers, puts the Press issue ever more plainly before the entire labour movement, irrespective of wings or trends. But the clear emergence of an issue is only the beginning; planned, co-ordinated and consistent action is called for, and quickly. So far this year the movement has been dragging its feet on the Press front; and time is not on our side.

Correspondence

On Roger Casement:

I thought perhaps somebody would have commented on the interesting and sympathetic article on Roger Casement which you published in the August issue of *Labour Monthly*, if only to mention the recent work that has been done to clear Casement's name.

For example, your contributor Mr. Gerald Hamilton says that Casement 'came to Ireland in the famous German submarine to try to put off the 1916 Rising'. He quotes as his authority Captain Spindler, commander of the ship which was sent at the same time. But Captain Monteith who accompanied Casement *in the submarine*, and must have known more of Casement's intentions than anybody, wrote in his book *Casement's Last Adventure* (Chicago, 1932) 'Another error into which many writers have fallen is the assumption that Casement tried to stop the Rising, that he came from Germany with that express purpose. This is not even a half-truth'. This was not Casement's defence at his trial, and there is no trace of it in his speech from the dock where he defends the right of national insurrection.

On the matter of the Diaries, Mr. Hamilton's suspicion of interpolation of forged entries gains much support from the researches of the late Dr. O. Mackey, who implicates among others Sir Basil Thompson, one time head of the Special Branch, who was compelled to resign in 1921 when it was alleged in Parliament that he had forged copies of Russian documents and the newspaper *Pravda*. He was arrested for indecency in Hyde Park in 1925 and at a later date committed suicide in Paris.

Shortly before his death, a few months ago, Dr. Mackie alleged that following the return of Casement's remains to Ireland in 1965 the British Government insisted on extracting an undertaking that the Diaries (still illegally held) should never be referred to in any radio or television script in Ireland. The allegation, which was officially contradicted, arose from the censoring of one of his own broadcasts. It would therefore seem possible that there may be still further exposures of the workings of the British imperialist State machine, which those in high places are anxious to postpone. As William Morris remarked, the British workers mistakenly judge their rulers by themselves. The full revelation of the lawlessness with which the guardians of 'law and order' treated Casement might encourage a revision of this trustfulness.

C. DESMOND GREAVES.

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CAIRO SEMINAR

Michael Harmel

A MOST notable event took place in Cairo at the end of October —the Seminar, *Africa: National and Social Revolution* held under the joint auspices of *Al Talia* (*Vanguard*), the theoretical journal of the Arab Socialist Union, and *World Marxist Review*, international monthly of the Marxist-Leninist parties. For the first time, representatives of revolutionary parties and liberation movements from all over the African Continent came together in a scientific discussion of the practical and theoretical implications of Africa's anti-imperialist revolution and its advance towards socialism; to evaluate the lessons, the advances and setbacks of the immediate past; to analyse the related problems of the fight to free the remaining enslaved areas, and the ways to maintain, strengthen and deepen independence in the liberated areas.

In addition to leading statesmen from the governing parties in the UAR, Guinea, Mali, Algeria and Tanzania, the seminar was attended by representatives of the fighting movements from the battle-fronts of the Portuguese colonies—Mozambique, Angola and Guinea (Bissau)—and of the fight against white supremacy in South Africa, Zimbabwe and South West Africa, as well as by leading progressives from a score of other African countries.

The tone of the seminar was set by the two opening papers, by Alexander Sobolev, executive secretary of the *World Marxist Review*, and El Sayad Loutfi El Kholi, editor-in-chief of *Al Talia*. Both were remarkable for their studied absence of stereotyped formulae, their recognition that the unfolding of the anti-imperialist African revolution, in today's world, poses unprecedented problems, requiring searching analysis and fresh thinking. In his absorbing examination, from the standpoint of historical materialism, of the special laws of the non-capitalist path of development in tropical African societies with their background of communal relationships, Dr. Sobolev warned: 'These are my own thoughts, and I am far from thinking that I have managed to find the absolute answers to the problems of Africa today.'

And Loutfi El Kholi, demanding that 'the revolutionary national African forces should reject in theory and practice the policy of anti-communism' called also on African Communists, at the same time, to 'reject doctrinal rigidity in the face of the new phenomena that appear in Africa'.

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The same spirit—scientific marshalling of facts, avoidance of over-simplified slogans and rhetoric—characterised practically all the papers and discussions that followed throughout the week, on such vital themes as the penetration and techniques of imperialism in Africa; the analysis of classes and social strata; the various types of army take-over, especially the tragic experience of Ghana; agrarian problems; the question of 'mass parties' and 'vanguard parties'; the consolidation of progressive African regimes through the extension of democracy and the advance to socialism.

There were over sixty written papers and reports presented to the seminar, besides a great many extemporary contributions to the discussion of each. Clearly it is impossible even to catalogue, let alone describe them, in a brief report of this nature. One recalls the detailed and stimulating analysis of the working class in Senegal, by Majhemout Diop of the African Independence Party; Dr. Nkrumah's interesting re-appraisal of 'African socialism' (the 'anthropological approach')—read by Mrs. Shirley Graham Du Bois; the brilliant contributions by the Mali and Guinea delegations; and by Ali Yata of the Moroccan Communist Party.

The Egyptians themselves not only acted as most generous hosts, but had obviously put a tremendous amount of research and thought into their many papers. All these documents require prolonged and detailed study and discussion when reported on by all who attended as delegates or observers, and published, not only in the two convening journals, but also, it is hoped, in the journals of all the organisations which participated. This process will constitute the main, long-term effect of the seminar—one is convinced, a very important one indeed.

But the immediate effect was one of tremendous stimulation and confidence. Gathered in Cairo, for the first time, were leaders and theoreticians from widely distant regions of Africa and for that matter of various schools of revolutionary thought and approach. Yet the temper was one of unity and fraternity, of a common language of resistance to colonialism and of conviction that the road towards scientific socialism is the only way to securing and extending true independence. The note of doctrinaire self-advertisement and shrill pseudo-polemics was markedly absent.

From several countries more than one delegation attended. For example, from Sudan came both the representatives of the Communist Party and of the People's Democratic Party; from South Africa, both the African National Congress and the Communist

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Party; from Morocco, both Ali Yata and the leader of Ben Barka's National Democratic Party. Yet in each case the delegations were in practice united and spoke with one voice.

The seminar met under the shadow of the counter-revolutionary planned offensive of imperialism which had made dangerous inroads, especially the sinister coup in Ghana, until yesterday the pride of Africa. One felt that here, seriously and soberly, our leaders were rallying and marshalling our forces, weighing the lessons, laying the essential theoretical basis for fresh advances, more profound and lasting, more firmly based in the masses.

It was obvious that such a seminar, held in Cairo, an embattled front-line fortress in the struggle against imperialism, could not bear a merely abstract or academic character. Africa is at war with imperialism, a war in which ideas are most important weapons. The dynamic and creative ideas, the profound unity of purpose and language, which emerged in Cairo are a heartening sign of the maturity of our advanced leaders, their determination and ability to win the complete emancipation of Africa, her unity and her advance to socialism.

Dr. Hewlett Johnson, 1874 - 1966

The Editorial Board of *Labour Monthly* pays tribute to the memory of Dr. Hewlett Johnson, an outstanding champion of peace and socialism, respected by millions throughout the world.

His life of tireless service, courage and devotion was an inspiration to all. He led the way in helping to promote closer understanding between Christians and non-Christian Marxists in the pursuit of common human aims.

He was the author of many fine books, the most famous of which was *The Socialist Sixth of the World*, a book which opened the eyes of many people, giving them new hope and understanding.

Always a good friend to *Labour Monthly*, his valued contributions were frequently in our pages over the years from 1941 until July 1966 when he sent us a message of greeting on our 45th Anniversary, saying 'I cannot express what we owe in debt to you'.

It is with pride that we repeat these words of a man whose service to the cause of justice and humanity leaves us all indebted to him.

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NEW LIGHT ON WEAPON COSTS

Ivor Montagu

IT has been said that Generals always prepare for the last war. In a sense this is true, because whereas victory used to be supposed guaranteed by the biggest battalions, then by the noisiest artillery, etc., nowadays they seem to suppose that what you will need is the largest stockpile of nuclear bombs. If there is one thing that common sense should have made plain to everybody it is that the whole affair is likely to peter out for want of targets soon after the un-stockpiling begins.

Perhaps it is easier to stockpile than to think. Certainly than to adapt, that is—for mankind—to act on thinking. And as statesmen—regrettable as it is, in certain cases, to have to admit it—are part of mankind, this is no doubt why they go on accumulating weapons even under conditions where this can be predicted to culminate in state collapse in peacetime, rather than state security in war. The Irish elk, as well as two somewhat surrealistically armoured dinosaurs (Stegosaurus and Triceratops), are among spectacularly weaponed forms of the past which may well have expended so much energy in their weapon formation that in the end the demerits in the everyday metabolic balance outweighed any benefits conferred when actual fighting came about.

That this is a significant part of what is happening to Britain has repeatedly been pointed out by, among others, the *Labour Monthly* editor. Now the *i*s are dotted and the *t*s crossed by a specialist writer who should, from office, know what he is talking about.*

We all know the age-old principle of the arms race. You get a sword. Your opponent gets a bow and arrow. You must get a shield and a spear. The question is: what is the impact upon this race of modern scientific advance and technology? What is the effect, for Britain, of the effort of trying to keep up with the Joneses where military technique is concerned? The answer: the fee for the Big League is just simply beyond our pockets.

Each new weapon must be more sophisticated than the one it replaces. So that:

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* Sir Solly Zuckerman: *Scientists at War. The Impact of Science on Military and Civil Affairs* (Hamish Hamilton, 21s.), particularly in the chapter 'The Impact of Technology', the reprint of a Lees Knowles lecture on Science and Military Affairs, delivered under the auspices of Trinity College, Cambridge, about a year ago.

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> Each new unit, in each new generation, within classes of equipment, produced in the arms race between the greater powers, costs more per unit weapon than the one it replaces. The increase varies in scale between different types of equipment, but even when one makes full allowances for the effects of inflation, one cannot find any examples, except possibly where standard items are concerned, where the application of more science and technology has led to a reduction in the costs of individual weapons. The cost of naval vessels and other equipment in which the heavy engineering industry is involved about doubles between successive generations. Our last generation of medium bombers were about ten times as expensive as their pre-war counterparts. Our present-day fighters are about sixteen times as expensive as the Spitfires and Hurricanes of the second world war. The cost of new radars today is about ten times that of those produced ten years ago.

But the increasing technical complexity of weapons not only has this effect in making each unit more expensive, it also makes fantastic the proportion of cost of any new weapon assignable to development costs. (In the case of Britain this is over 50 per cent.) No matter how you try to economise in quantity—to make do with fewer of the finished weapons, since the needs, say of Britain, for defence might be less than those of 'super-powers' for 'global policies'—your independent development costs would necessarily be the same. Thus, if you want to keep in the race, no modesty of objective can evade the exigencies of the development costs. 'Forty years ago the arms race was still, to a large extent, a race for quantity . . . In the more recent past it has been a race for quality—at whatever point the race was entered.'

In other words, Britain could not economise proportionately by making its requirements in units one tenth those of a 'super-power'. To remain in the race at all the comparative cost of this modest quantity would be over one-half.

This monstrous development charge is inbuilt in the nature of a sophistication race and cannot be avoided. TSR2, Skybolt and the rest are not the result of incompetence, the 'fault' of the respective governments, Tory or Labour, in office at various stages in their history. They derive from the nature of a situation which neither shows any inclination to alter, and which the mutual recrimination of one against the other does not serve any purpose except to disguise. Such expense is not waste. You have to embark on ambitious schemes, in case your opponent does. But: 'Bitter experience has taught . . . that it is dangerous to embark on ambitious schemes for the development of weapons systems, the components of which have themselves not been proved, and which may even be dependent for their working on basic information that has not yet been gained, or

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on special materials which have not yet been developed.' So you *must* spend money on developing sub-systems and components such as a new aero engine, or an air-borne radar, or some new guidance system, possibly of no use in themselves, before you know whether some other essential aspect of the complete weapon will prove workable or no. Projects 'are cancelled not only because they cost enormous sums in relation to the military needs they are designed to satisfy, but because it becomes clear as development proceeds that certain technical problems which at the start it had been assumed could be overcome become far too difficult to solve.'

It may be added that the longer a process of development takes—and the greater the 'progress' of sophistication, the longer it must take—the greater the probability that in the meantime the rival will have developed a more advanced counter-system, and your new generation weapon will be obsolete before it is even completed. Hence you must alter as you go along '—and the longer it takes to complete a project the more costly it becomes'. Yet another encouraging detail: the more sophisticated a weapon is, the more specialised—and hence the more useless for any other purpose. A sword may be used to cut any throat, but a high-flying supersonic plane is useless for observation in the jungle. Hence all the hardware you have bought for an emergency may be without avail if the emergency is other than exactly as foreseen.

Where does such expenditure leave Britain at present? 'This is not the end of the story. Each new generation of equipment makes greater demands than its predecessor for supporting personnel.' Supporting, it may be said, not only to maintain it and operate it, but for the development and making, to say nothing of the devising. Of a total labour force in Britain of 25 million, 1.4 million skilled men and women are engaged in defence industry. 40 per cent of the country's total research and development bill goes on 'defence'. It uses 20 per cent of all scientists and engineers employed in the UK on research and development and just over half the total resources for science and engineering made available by the Government. This is only part of the weight of the ball and chain handicapping Britain's efforts to modernise its industry, to 'become competitive' in production. Zuckerman also disposes of the contention that defence research is beneficial by 'fall-out' of incidental discoveries capable of peaceful uses. This case is not proved, he concludes, the claim is contrary to experience, the know-how 'fall out' is likely to be much

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less than that incidental to fundamental research, and he notes the existence of 'military space laboratories for which more money has been assigned than would be necessary to maintain the capital and current revenue of all British universities for three years'.

And it is a position with an inbuilt impossibility to maintain. The rate of increasing sophistication of weapons is far higher than any rate that can possibly be conceived as practical—even forgetting all freezes—for increase in the Gross National Product. Hence no mere maintenance of the proportion of Gross National Product comprised by defence expenditure, still less an expenditure 'ceiling', can suffice even to keep you standing in one place. A cost ceiling, or even expenditure increased in proportion with the GNP, means a decrease in what you get. Zuckerman points out that there are only three ways of economising in cost of production while yet yielding as many units: cutting down the number of types, so as to produce more of each of fewer types, which because of the specialisation of weapons means giving up certain military roles. Lessening development costs and research by co-operating with other countries. Avoiding the research costs by buying weapons produced by other countries.

In other words, to draw a conclusion which will certainly be reached by the reader although Zuckerman evades it, the modern development of scientific technology must make British participation in the arms race self-defeating, since its weapons system can neither safeguard independence nor serve to maintain its self-set tasks of empire. The effort to do so, necessarily vain, is also inbuilt suicide. It must infallibly destroy what it sets out to preserve. One has the impression, in reading the reminiscences of Churchill and other war-time statesmen, as well as watching the antics of contemporary ones, that their attitude to scientists has been rather like that of medieval monarchs to their jesters: they are licensed to talk, but their wisdom can be treated as folly. Sir Solly is a defence adviser, but why bother to draw conclusions from his advice? A post-medieval technical innovation, printing, may, however, perhaps secure for these warnings a bit more impact than did the bauble, the bladder and the cap and bells.

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NATIONAL CONVENTION ON VIETNAM

Zelda Curtis

Delegate of the Borough of Barnet
Council for Peace in Vietnam.

ON November 11, 1966, the people of Britain showed their Government that they still believe Britain has a 'world role'—in helping to bring peace to Vietnam.

Over 900 representatives of organisations involving hundreds of thousands from all parts of Britain came together in the Central Hall, Westminster, under the sponsorship of the British Council for Peace in Vietnam. They came from Labour, Liberal and Communist Parties; from every University they came, both staff and students being represented; from Church bodies, peace organisations and Co-operative Guilds; and from many trade unions, including from branch and executive level. In fact, the support was so overwhelming that the organisers were forced at the last moment to change from a small hall to the Great Hall, and the queue snaked from the street, through the foyer and up the great curved staircase four and five deep.

The Hall itself was decorated with banners that echoed the feelings of the assembly. 'Why doesn't Wilson restrain Johnson?', 'We voted Labour, but not for war in Vietnam!' and the real call of the whole meeting 'Implement the Geneva Agreements, which provide for Sovereignty, Independence and Unity of Vietnam'.

Lord Brockway, the Chairman of the British Council for Peace in Vietnam, reminded the audience that this was a conference on *action* and he called for 'united action from all organisations, who seek the end of the war in Vietnam on the basis of the Geneva Agreements, to oppose the support of the British Government of American aggression in Vietnam'. The first speaker, Dorothy Woodman, an authority on South East Asian affairs, gave the background and facts of the present catastrophe in Vietnam. Reminding delegates that in the five days from November 2 to 6, 893 of the National Liberation Forces had been killed and 199 captured; 127 U.S. troops killed, 605 wounded and 8 captured in South Vietnam, she said it was appropriate that this meeting was held on the Day of Remembrance. She felt that millions who voted for the Labour Government in 1964 believed that they would

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reverse Tory policy on Vietnam, yet the Labour Government had continued to endorse U.S. aggression and had 'betrayed their principles for the sake of the dollar'.

In that summer of 1964, De Gaulle had urged the reconvening of the Geneva Conference; so too had U Thant and the Soviet Union. An offer from Hanoi to negotiate had been sent through U Thant to the State Department, yet Johnson's only answers were 'We do not believe in conferences called to ratify terror' and on August 5 the Tonkin Incident took place! And now we have seen Johnson's 'whistle-stop' tour to thank his allies for their support—allies like 'puppet' Ky of South Vietnam and Park Chung Hee of South Korea, and the reactionary governments of Australia and New Zealand, where he was met all along the line by great demonstrations of the people against his aggressive policies.

There were speeches from delegates representing many overseas organisations, and each stressed his feeling of solidarity in struggle with the Vietnamese people, and each stressed too the important role for peace that the British people can play. Eric Heffer, MP, as a representative of those MPs who fought to ensure that the British Government changed its policy, put the onus on those in the trade unions and Labour Party branches who had not done sufficient to back up the struggle in the Trades Union Congress and Labour Party Conference by getting their organisations to mandate them to support the resolutions put on Vietnam. Reminding the delegates that George Brown was off to Moscow, undoubtedly to raise the question of Vietnam, he said there must be a vigorous campaign to make the voice of the people heard by George Brown, so that he knows their wish for the Labour Government to dissociate itself from U.S. policy, 'for only then will the voice of Britain really be listened to in the world'.

A resolution was put to the Conference and overwhelmingly passed, calling for the withdrawal of the troops of America and her allies by an early and fixed date; the cessation of American bombing; the direct representation of the National Liberation Front and the full implementation of the Geneva Agreements; and ended by calling on the British Government to dissociate itself from the American intervention and to co-operate with other Governments to secure an end to the war on this basis. This resolution was welcomed by Jack Woddis, Executive Committee member of the Communist Party, who said:

> The issue is simple . . . the powerful imperialist country, the United States,

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> has made a brutal assault on Vietnam in defiance of the United Nations Charter, the Geneva Agreements and even in defiance of the United States Constitution itself . . . Only the united pressure of the thousands represented here will compel the Government to change its policy.

And Lawrence Daly, General Secretary of the Scottish Mineworkers, spoke in support too, saying that it had been learned from the history of the wars for national liberation and human freedom that 'it is incorrect to refuse to discriminate between the victim and the aggressor' and we must make full use of the rights hard won by our trade union forefathers 'to exercise pressure through the labour and trade union movement on our Government'.

So great was the desire of the delegates to show their support of the Resolution that speaker after speaker rushed to the platform, from the Fellowship of Reconciliation, from the Peace Pledge Union, from the Liberal Party, from Oxford University and London University, until the Chairman had to make the point once more that the Conference was really called to decide on action, and he had, therefore, to close discussion and put recommendations for action before the delegates. These actions included deputations to the American Embassy and the Australian and New Zealand High Commissions; deputations to MPs; forums, Towns Meetings and other educational activities under the auspices of Local Authorities; and support for the demonstrations on Human Rights Day, December 10, initiated by the International Confederation for Disarmament and Peace. One addition was suggested by Gordon Schaffer of the Co-operative Party, who called for a campaign around U Thant as was agreed at the Annual Co-operative Conference recently. And to those who might feel that pressure could not force the Government to act, he said 'It was pressure from the labour and trade union movement that forced Lloyd George to climb down and stopped the Intervention in 1920'.

The meeting supported all these actions and before they could leave the Hall they were reinforced by more than a thousand more people demonstrating their support of the action endorsed by the delegates. These thousands of people are determined that the people of Vietnam should have the right to run their own country in their own way, and they are going to wage a determined campaign to involve many more millions of people in a fight to change the British Government's endorsement of United States policy in South East Asia.

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BOOK REVIEWS

The Company I've Kept

Hugh MacDiarmid

Hutchinson, 288 pp., 35s.

HUGH MACDIARMID MAKES IT CLEAR at once that his latest work in prose is a record of other people not a revelation of personal intimacies. The 'confessions' of Hugh MacDiarmid might be as interesting as those of Rousseau but nobody can understand better than myself his choice in the way of autobiography. 'Here I am concerned with a host of other people, and only with myself in so far as my personality —or rather my significance as a poet and politician—is reflected in my relations with them.'

Inevitably in reading *The Company I've Kept* I have been comparing all the time his impressions of the various people of whom he writes with my own. I was glad to read his admirable evocation of that remarkable Parsee composer Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji, bringing back as it does for me memories of the early days of my review *The Gramophone*. I was even more glad to read his tribute to Francis George Scott whose integrity I admired equally as a man and as a composer. I was glad to meet again Major Douglas of Social Credit whom I met first through Hugh MacDiarmid. Naturally I disagreed with MacDiarmid's praise of some of the company he has kept. I thought Ezra Pound a charlatan and have never been able to forgive him for the wrong he did to Propertius, my favourite Roman poet. I could argue with MacDiarmid about his failure to grasp what Christian faith has meant to humanity, and often his apparent ignorance of its history. I could rap his knuckles for calling Sir William MacTaggart a 'social climber' and thus displaying an almost alarming ignorance. On the other hand, I much enjoyed his condemnation of all novelists except Lewis Crassic Gibbon because it reminded me of the carnivorous habits of the Georgian poets when they used to devour novelists almost every month in the *London Mercury*, in the days of Sir John Squire and the Squirarchy.

However, whatever differences of opinion about other people Hugh MacDiarmid and I may have, I can look back to reading *A Drunk Man Looks at the Thistle* forty years ago and recognising a born poet whose friendship has been a privilege and whose career has been a marvel.

SIR COMPTON MACKENZIE.

Argument on Socialism

Maurice Dobb

Lawrence & Wishart, 64 pp., 3s. 6d.

IN THIS SHORT BOOK, Mr. Dobb states the case for Socialism in the situation of Britain in 1966, and—what is equally important for those who have to engage in controversy—the case against capitalism. And he states them in 64 pages, which helps a great many people in these days of haste.

It would not have been so difficult, perhaps, to state the case in 300 pages; but to do it comprehensively, clearly, and with complete frankness, in the length of a pamphlet must have taxed even Mr. Dobb's abilities, and to have called for the most skilful pruning; but he has succeeded, and the result, expressed in clear intelligible English, is just what is needed.

The book should be compulsory reading for the leaders of the Labour Party; everyone else can read it with pleasure as well as advantage.

D. N. PRITT.

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The Kremlin and the Embassy

Sir William Hayter, KCMG

Hodder and Stoughton, 160 pp., 25s.

SIR WILLIAM, now Warden of New College, Oxford, was British Ambassador in Moscow from 1953 to 1957.

This book, very well printed, is an account of his stay in the Soviet Union. Nearly one-half of it is devoted to travel in Central Asia and the Caucasus; the photographs are agreeable, and the text (though written from the familiar standpoint of a kindly British aristocrat among those quaint natives) almost as much so.

The rest deals with personalities, foreign policy and the Twentieth Party Congress in 1956. The political analysis does not go very deep, and often bumps along at the level of leading articles in our more besotted Conservative newspapers. But sometimes it has flashes of understanding which it would be useful for politicians to study—as for example when he warned the Foreign Office that the Russians 'were not likely to let us bully them' (p. 115), that there is no 'tradition of intervention by the army as such in politics' in the Soviet Union (p. 131), that the British were 'foolish . . . to lead the forces of intervention' in 1917-1920 (p. 133), and that when Khrushchov said that at Suez 'the British and French Governments had been behaving like bandits', Sir William's own 'private opinion was that this was not far from the truth' (p. 151).

The book gives no sign whatever of grasping why the workers and collective farmers of the USSR really celebrate the October revolution.

ANDREW ROTHSTEIN.

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Index to Volume XLVIII

I—AUTHORS

		Page
A DELEGATE	A.E.U. National Committee, 1966	272
ALDRIDGE, James	The Comedians (R)	94
ARNOT, R. Page	From Right to Left (R)	89
	The State Steps In	253
AYLING, Ronald	Correspondence: On Sean O'Casey	47
BARR, Sam	Scotland and the Freeze	566
BERGER, John	Lucifer and Other Poems (R)	541
BOSE, Dilip	The Tashkent Agreement	122
BROOKS, Bill	A Reader's Guide to the Study of Marxism (R)	143
BROWN, Alan	Steel Turnabout	83
	Poverty (R)	131
	9.5.1 = ?	229
BURCHETT, Wilfred	The Story Behind Indonesia's Coup	26
BURNS, Emile	Why the Stagnation in Britain's Economy?	16
	Groundwork to Economic Planning (R)	287
	Left in the Centre (R)	543
CAMPBELL, J. R.	Seamen and the State	305
CARVELL, V.	A New Look at Russia (R)	46
	Training for Industry	178
CHATER, Tony	As I Recall (R)	493
COULISHAW, JP, T. E.	Battle of Brighton	462
COX, Idris	New Crisis in Africa	219
	New Situation in Kenya	366
	Nigerian Government and Politics (R)	446
CURTIS, Zelda	A Fighting Magazine	520
	National Convention on Vietnam	582
C.W.	Nasser's Egypt (R)	44
DOBB, Maurice	Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy (R)	95
DOUGLASS, Stuart	Trends in Television Drama	182
DUTT, Clemens	Modern Philosophical Ideas (R)	136
DUTT, R. Palme	Notes of the Month: The Left and Communism	1
	Notes of the Month: What Price 'Defence'?	49
	Notes of the Month: Vietnam—Hour of Decision	97
	Notes of the Month: Hail Morning Star!	145
	Notes of the Month: Who Pays the Bill?	193
	Notes of the Month: Nato? No! Europe? Yes!	241
	Notes of the Month: Forty Five Years	289
	Notes of the Month: Into Battle	401
	Notes of the Month: Why 'Plan' a Slump?	449
	Notes of the Month: What is Socialism?	497
	Notes of the Month: Deflation, Devaluation and Damnation	545
	Rosa Luxemburg (R)	393
	MacDonaldism	486
EATON, John	A New Look at Britain's Economic Policy (R)	191
	Technological Revolution (R)	391
ENISAH, C.	Suez—Ten Years After	537
FALBER, Helen	Contributions to Freedom, 48; Platform for the Left, 96; In the Cause of Peace, 144; Young Readers, 192; Proud Record, 240; Anniversary Double, 288; Set Fair, 352; Young and Wise, 400; Furious Action, 448; For Services Rendered, 496; Progress Report, 521; Rising Response	592
FIRST, Ruth	South-West Africa	419
FORGE, Ken	Now the Common School	432
GRADWELL, I.	A National Transport Plan	79
GREAVES, C. Desmond	The Anglo-Irish Trade Agreement	75
	The Irish Question, 1840-1921 (R)	141
	Paisleyism and 'Progress'	435
	On Roger Casement (Correspondence)	574
GUY, L. G.	Trade Unions: Our Declaration of Intent	415
HAMILTON, Gerald	Roger Casement	379
HAMMARLING, P.	Industry and Labour in the USSR (R)	495
HANNINGTON, Wal	The Fight Against Unemployment Today	560
HARMEL, Michael	Socialist Ideas in Africa (R)	491
	Cairo Seminar	575
HART, Finlay	Fairfield and the Future of Shipbuilding	62
	Boilermakers' Conference	333
HENDY, Jack	Trade Union Legislation (Correspondence)	274
HETHERINGTON, Tony	Youth on the March	175
HO Chi Minh	Message to the Pope (Document)	93
HODGKIN, Thomas	Counter-Revolution in Ghana	162
HOWE, Bertha W.	An American's Century	531

(R) stands for Review throughout.

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ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

		Page
HUTT, Allen	Press Problems of the Labour Movement	127
	The Truth About *The Times*	570
JAGAN, Cheddi	Havana Conference	116
KITSON, Alex	Vietnam: A Protest from Britain	312
KUCZYNSKI, J.	Population Theories (Correspondence)	529
LABOUR MONTHLY	Greetings on the 45th Anniversary: I. From Individual Friends: Dr. H. Aptheker, 347; John Berger, 342; Prof. J. D. Bernal, 344; Lord F. Brockway, 345; Prof. E. H. S. Burhop, 344; Maurice Dobb, 344; George Elvin, 344; John Gollan, 343; C. Desmond Greaves, 345; Emrys Hughes, MP, 281; Dr. Cheddi Jagan, 282; The Very Rev. Hewlett Johnson, 345; Prof. J. Kuczynski, 347; Luigi Longo, 345; Sir Compton Mackenzie, 343; George Matthews, 344; S. Nosaka, 346; Gaston Plissonnier, 346; Stanley B. Ryerson, 282; Malcolm Salmon, 283; Mrs. Renee Short, MP, 281; Sydney Silverman, MP, 281; Lord Snow, 343.	
	II. From Fraternal Journals: Problems of Peace and Socialism (World Marxist Review), 347; New World Review, 348; Political Affairs, 348; Science and Society, 348; The Worker, 348; International Affairs, 349; Kommunist, 349; New Times, 349; Pravda, 350; The Tribune, 387; Weg und Ziel, 387; Rabotnicesko Delo, 387; Mezinarodni Politika, 387; Granma, 388; Cahiers du Communisme, 388; Democratie Nouvelle, 388; La Pensee, 389; Einheit, 389; Wirtschafts Wissenschaft, 389; Kol Haam, 389; Zo Hadarekh, 390; Politiek en Cultuur	390
MACKENZIE, Sir Compton	Memories of Gallacher (R)	284
	The Company I've Kept (R)	585
MARX, Eleanor	Unpublished Letter to F. Engels (I)	337
	Unpublished Letter to F. Engels (II)	383
McGAHEY, Mick	British Miners in Conference	362
MONTAGU, Ivor	What Europe?	209
	Brasshats and Bureaucrats (R)	286
	The Other War—Laos	322
	More on Kennedy	510
	New Light on Weapon Costs (R)	578
MOORMAN, Paul	Trade Unions—Student Style	172
MORTIMER, J. E.	The Prices and Incomes Bill	158
	Labour's Incomes Policy and the Trade Union Movement	464
NANDY, Dipak	Immigrants at Work	264
NICHOLAS, Peter	The Motor Industry Inquiry	20
NICHOLSON, Fergus	Politics and Students	481
NICOLSON, Jock	Rail Crisis—What Next?	112
NYANDORO, G. B.	Zimbabwe and the Commonwealth Conference	478
O'BRIEN, M.	Vietnam: A Protest from Australia	311
PAYNTER, Will	Problems of Nationalised Coal	302
PEET, John	The German Dialogue	316
PRITT, Q.C., D. N.	Invitation to an Inquest (R)	45
	Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism (R)	190
	Spanish Notebooks (R)	239
	Vietnam: Challenge to us All...	258
	Neo-Nazis and the Future of Europe	313
	Parliament and Mumbo-Jumbo (R)	399
	The Conjurors (R)	447
	"What I did was right . . ." (R)	543
	Argument on Socialism (R)	585
PYM, Diana	Palace Government in Greece...	428
QUAESTOR	Challenge to the Left (Notes)...	353
	Barriers to World Trade at Geneva	522
RAMELSON, Bert	Truth About That Deficit	469
RATHBONE, Hugo	Modern Capitalism (R)	188
R.L.P.	Population Theories (Correspondence)	528
ROSENBERG, W.	Agriculture, Industry and Socialist Development	29
ROTHSTEIN, Andrew	Unpublished Letter to the Economist	70
	The Reckoning (R)	140
	Soviet Communists in Congress	224
	The British Communist Party (R)	350
	H. G. Wells on Socialism—Sixty Years Ago	426
	The Kremlin and the Embassy (R)	586
SCHAFFER, Gordon	The Grand Design (R)	43
SEYD, Nicola	Students in Conference	86
SHAW, Bernard	The Denshawai Horror of June 1906	262
SMART, W. H.	Public Ownership of the Construction Industry	370
SPENCE, Alan	Aerospace Metaphysicians	66
STACEY, B. G.	Ergonomics—A Significant Development	34
TEESDALE, George	Incomes and Prices: What Now?	207
TOMLINSON, Cllr. A.	Labour Party Conference: Delegate's Report	535
TONGE, Ald. F.	A House on Clerkenwell Green (R)	494
TUCKETT, Angela	Amongst Those Present	385
VERNON, Hilda	South-East Asia in Turmoil (R)	142

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

		Page
	Vietnam—Our Responsibility...	474
VERNON, Tom	Council Rents Crisis	234
	The Rent Act Fiasco	329
	Council Rents' Perspective	515
WALKER, A. R.	An Inquiry into Enoughness (R)	542
WALLACE, Billy	Redundancies in Belfast	467
WATEN, Judah	Yiddish Culture in West and East	374
	Will Yiddish Culture Survive?	440
WILLIAMSON, J.	The Left in the United States	275
WODDIS, Jack	Les Damnés de la Terre (R)	38

II—SUBJECTS

		Page
AFRICA	Les Damnés de la Terre (R)	38
	Counter-Revolution in Ghana...	162
	Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism (R) ...	190
	New Crisis in Africa	219
	Declaration of the Committee for the Defence of the Revolution in Ghana	222
	New Situation in Kenya	366
	South-West Africa	419
	Nigerian Government and Politics (R)	446
	Socialist Ideas in Africa (R)	491
	Cairo Seminar	575
AGRICULTURE	Agriculture, Industry and Socialist Development	29
AIRCRAFT INDUSTRY	Aerospace Metaphysicians	66
	Redundancies in Belfast	467
BRITISH PRESS	Press Problems of the Labour Movement	127
	The Truth About *The Times*	570
BUILDING INDUSTRY	Public Ownership of the Construction Industry	370
CORRESPONDENCE	On Sean O'Casey	47
	Trade Union Legislation	274
	Population Theories	528
	On Roger Casement	574
CUBA	Havana Conference	116
DOCUMENTS	Ho Chi Minh's Message to the Pope	93
	Declaration of the Committee for the Defence of the Revolution in Ghana	222
	The 'Grey Plan'	485
ECONOMIC SITUATION	Why the Stagnation in Britain's Economy	16
	What Price 'Defence'?	49
	Poverty (R)	131
	Who Pays the Bill?	193
	Incomes and Prices: What Now?	207
	What Europe?	209
	9.5.1 = ?	229
	Groundwork to Economic Planning (R)	287
	Why 'Plan' a Slump?	449
	Truth About That Deficit	469
	Barriers to World Trade at Geneva	522
	Deflation, Devaluation and Damnation	545
EDUCATION	Now the Common School	432
EGYPT	Nasser's Egypt (R)	44
	Bernard Shaw on the Denshawai Horror, June 1906... ...	262
	Suez—Ten Years Ago	472
	Suez—Ten Years After	537
EUROPE	What Europe?	209
	Nato? No! Europe? Yes!	241
GERMANY	The Grand Design (R)...	43
	Neo-Nazis and the Future of Europe	313
	The German Dialogue	316
	The 'Grey Plan' (Document)	485
GHANA	Counter-Revolution in Ghana...	162
	Declaration of the Committee for the Defence of the Revolution in Ghana	222
GREECE	Palace Government in Greece	428
GREETINGS	(See Author's Index under Labour Monthly)	
HOUSING AND RENTS	Council Rents Crisis	234
	The Rent Act Fiasco	329
	Council Rents Perspective	515
ILLUSTRATIONS	25, 73, 120-1, 168, 216-7, 262, 320. 336, 373, 426, 472-3, 520, 521, 530, 531	568-9
IMMIGRATION	Immigrants at Work	264
INDIA	Tashkent Agreement	122
INDONESIA	The Story Behind Indonesia's Coup	26

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

		Page
IRELAND	Anglo-Irish Trade Agreement	75
	The Irish Question: 1840-1921 (R)	141
	Easter Week, 1916	168
	Roger Casement	379
	Paisleyism and 'Progress'	435
	On Roger Casement (Correspondence)	574
JEWISH CULTURE	Yiddish Culture in West and East	374
	Will Yiddish Culture Survive?	440
LABOUR MOVEMENT	The Left and Communism	1
	The Labour Party Emerges	24
	From Right to Left (R)	89
	Press Problems of the Labour Movement	127
	Hail Morning Star!	145
	Challenge to the Left	353
	Why 'Plan' a Slump?	449
	Battle of Brighton	462
	What is Socialism?	497
	Labour Party Conference: Delegate's Report	535
	Left in the Centre (R)	543
	The Fight Against Unemployment Today	560
LAOS	The Other War	322
MARXISM	Modern Philosophical Ideas (R)	136
	A Reader's Guide to the Study of Marxism (R)	140
MINING INDUSTRY	Problems of Nationalised Coal	302
	British Miners in Conference	362
OBITUARIES	Bert Wynn	181
	George Hardy	312
	Claude Berridge	372
	Wal Hannington	560
	Dr. Hewlett Johnson	577
POPULATION	Population Theories	528
RAILWAYS	Rail Crisis—What Next?	112
RHODESIA	Zimbabwe and the Commonwealth Conference	478
SHIPBUILDING	Fairfield and the Future of Shipbuilding	62
SOCIALISM	H. G. Wells on Socialism—Sixty Years Ago	426
	What is Socialism?	497
SPAIN	The Spanish General Election, 1936	72
	Fascist War on the Spanish People, 1936	321
STEEL	Steel Turnabout	83
STUDENT MOVEMENT	Students in Conference	86
	Trade Unions—Student Style	172
	Politics and Students	481
TECHNOLOGY	Ergonomics—A Significant Development	34
	Technological Revolution (R)	391
TELEVISION	Trends in Television Drama	182
TRADE UNION MOVEMENT	The Motor Industry Inquiry	20
	Fairfield and the Future of Shipbuilding	62
	Rail Crisis—What Next?	112
	The Prices and Incomes Bill	158
	Incomes and Prices: What Now?	207
	General Strike, May 1926	215
	The State Steps In	253
	A Council of Action	269
	AEU National Committee, 1966	272
	Trade Union Legislation	274
	Problems of Nationalised Coal	302
	Seamen and the State	305
	Boilermakers' Conference	333
	British Miners in Conference	362
	Into Battle	401
	Trade Unions: Our Declaration of Intent	415
	Labour's Incomes Policy and the Trade Union Movement	464
	Redundancies in Belfast	467
	Scotland and the Freeze	566
TRANSPORT	A National Transport Plan	79
USA	The Left in the United States	275
	More on Kennedy	510
	An American's Century	531
USSR	A New Look at Russia (R)	46
	Unpublished Letter to the Economist	70
	Training for Industry	178
	Soviet Communists in Congress	224
	Industry and Labour in USSR (R)	495
VIETNAM	Vietnam—Hour of Decision	97
	South-East Asia in Turmoil (R)	142
	Vietnam: Challenge to us All	258
	A Protest from Australia	311
	A Protest from Britain	312
	Vietnam: Our Responsibility	474
	National Convention on Vietnam	582
YOUTH	Youth on the March	175
	Training for Industry	178

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
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BOOKS REVIEWED

Author or Editor	Title (and Reviewer)	Page
Abel-Smith, Brian and Townsend, P.	**The Poor and the Poorest** (Alan Brown)	131
Avon, Earl of	**The Reckoning** (A. Rothstein)	140
Cohen, J. and Klugmann, J.	**A Reader's Guide to the Study of Marxism** (Bill Brooks)	143
Cornforth, Maurice	**Marxism and the Linguistic Philosophy** (Clemens Dutt)	136
Cox, Idris	**Socialist Ideas in Africa** (M. Harmel)	491
Crozier, Brian	**South-East Asia in Turmoil** (H. Vernon)	142
Dobb, Maurice	**Argument on Socialism** (D. N. Pritt)	585
Dowse, R. E.	**Left in the Centre** (Emile Burns)	543
Dutt, Salme	**Lucifer and Other Poems** (John Berger)	541
Epstein, Edward Jay	**Inquest: The Warren Commission and the Establishment of Truth** (I. Montagu)	510
Fanon, Frantz	**Les Damnés de la Terre** (J. Woddis)	38
Fischer, Bram	**'What I did was right . . .'** (D. N. Pritt)	543
Gallacher, William	**Last Memoirs of William Gallacher** (Compton Mackenzie)	284
Greene, Graham	**The Comedians** (James Aldridge)	94
Hayter, Sir William	**The Kremlin and The Embassy** (Andrew Rothstein)	586
Hughes, MP, Emrys	**Parliament and Mumbo-Jumbo** (D. N. Pritt)	399
Lane, Mark	**Rush to Judgment** (I. Montagu)	510
Lang, D.	**An Inquiry into Enoughness** (A. R. Walker)	542
Lilley, S.	**Men, Machines and History** (J. Eaton)	391
MacDiarmid, Hugh	**The Company I've Kept** (Sir Compton Mackenzie)	585
Macfarlane, L. J.	**British Communist Party** (A. Rothstein)	350
Mackintosh, J. P.	**Nigerian Government and Politics** (Idris Cox)	446
Maisky, Ivan	**Spanish Notebooks** (D. N. Pritt)	239
Mandel, W.	**A New Look at Russia** (V. Carvell)	46
Mansergh, N.	**The Irish Question: 1840-1921** (C. Desmond Greaves)	141
Mansfield, P.	**Nasser's Egypt** (C.W.)	44
Mitchell, Joan	**Groundwork to Economic Planning** (E. Burns)	287
Nettl, J. P.	**Rosa Luxemburg** (R.P.D.)	393
Nkrumah, K.	**Neo-Colonialism: Last Stage of Imperialism** (D. N. Pritt)	190
Orr, Lord Boyd	**As I Recall** (T. Chater)	493
Osipov, G. V.	**Industry and Labour in the USSR** (P. Hammarling)	495
Pritt, D. N.	**From Right to Left** (R. Page Arnot)	89
	Brasshats and Bureaucrats (Part II) (Ivor Montagu)	286
Rhys Williams, Juliet	**A New Look at Britain's Economic Policy** (J. Eaton)	191
Rothstein, Andrew	**A House on Clerkenwell Green** (F. Tonge)	494
Schnier, W. and M.	**Invitation to an Inquest** (D. N. Pritt)	45
Schumpeter, J.	**Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy** (M. Dobb)	95
Shonfield, A.	**Modern Capitalism** (Hugo Rathbone)	188
Strauss, F. G.	**The Grand Design** (G. Schaffer)	43
Todd, Judith	**The Conjurors** (D. N. Pritt)	447
Zuckerman, Sir Solly	**Scientists at War. The Impact of Science on Military and Civil Affairs**	578

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